

San'Shyuum



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"Who would doubt the Prophets? What have we foretold that has not come to pass?"
— Prophet of Truth

San'Shyuum (Latin *Perfidia vermis*,^[1] meaning "Worms of Treachery"^[3]), also known as **Prophets** by [humanity](#), are a species who were the leadership caste within the [Covenant](#), and one of the more mysterious member races of the hierarchy. Prophets appear to exert complete control over religious and political affairs, thus fulfilling their role as leaders. The Prophets enforce a misguided theology based on the false belief that firing the [Halo Array](#) will start the [Great Journey](#), transcending them into a god-like status. Although physically frail compared to other Covenant species, they wield near absolute power over the Covenant. They have a strong religious importance throughout the Covenant Hierarchy.

Contents

[show]

Summary [Edit](#)

Originating from Janjur Qom, the San'Shyuum are the religious leaders and commanding caste of the Covenant hierarchy. They hold a vital position in the Covenant, because they are responsible for studying the holy [Forerunner](#) artifacts and putting them to use to develop new technology. They are an integral part of the Covenant [High Council](#), formerly sharing this responsibility with the [Sangheili](#)^[4] and later the [Jiralhanae](#). At any given time, the Covenant is headed by a triumvirate of Prophets. The Prophet triumvirates known in recent years were Obligation, Tolerance and Restraint, and most recently Truth, Mercy and Regret, all of whom are now deceased. Regret was killed by [John-117](#) on [Delta Halo](#), Mercy by the [Flood](#) on [High Charity](#), and Truth by [Thel 'Vadam](#) in the long range beacon on the [Ark](#).

Prophets are extremely frail, possibly due to being adapted for a low-gravity environment. The supplemental book incorporated in the *[Halo 3 Collector's and Legendary Edition](#)* suggests that inbreeding and a lack of concern for physical health, perhaps superseded by the single-minded desire to achieve "trans-sentience" (Also known as the "Great Journey"), is probably responsible for this outcome.



San'Shyuum
(Perfidia vermis)

Biographical information	
Homeworld	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Janjur Qom </div> <div> <div>(Original)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">High Charity <div>(Adopted)^[1]</div> </div>
Physical information	
Average height	<div> 220 centimetres (7 ft 3 in)^[1] </div>
Average weight	<div> 90 kilograms (200 lb)^[1] </div>
Skin color	<div> Brown-pink, Gray-pink </div>
Distinctions	<div> Long necks, humanoid features </div>
Military and political information	
Equipment	<div> Gravity thrones, Antigravity belt^[2] </div>
Types	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">High ProphetSan'Shyuum High CouncilorLegate </div>
Affiliation	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Covenant Empire </div>
Notable individuals	<div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Prophet of TruthProphet of MercyProphet of RegretProphet of CandorProphet of Disdain </div>

It is known that they claim to have evolved on a former colony of an ancient race called the **Forerunners**^[5] which the Covenant revere as their gods. According to the Prophets their world was destroyed some 3200 years ago (approx. 648 BCE). This was the result of a natural stellar collapse. Because of this, they have made their new home world the mobile-planetoid, *High Charity*." It is also known that they waged a fierce and bloody war against the **Sangheili** at some point. This was only halted by their realization that war would never come to an end.^[5] The two races united to learn their secrets, forming a mutually beneficial arrangement that would eventually become the Covenant. They usually see themselves above the Sangheili however. The Sangheili would become the protectors of the Prophets while the Prophets would dedicate themselves to studying their "gods" and learning the secrets behind the "ascension" they left on.^[4]

As the representatives of the gods, the Prophets hold a great amount of power over the other races of the Covenant. They earned reverential titles such as "Holy One" and "Eminence."^[6] They are protected at all times by the mighty **Legions of Sangheili Honor Guardsmen**,^[7] and rarely involve themselves in combat. They prefer to dedicate themselves to studying **Forerunner** artifacts. However, important events to the Covenant usually require a high-ranking Prophet, such as a Hierarchy, to be present.^[4]

The majority of the Prophets use anti-gravity belts to support themselves. Higher ranking Prophets, such as the Hierarchs (a group of three Prophets with total control of the Covenant), use anti-gravity thrones to support themselves. These however, are not so much for support as they are for personal defense - they are fitted with holographic emitters, an **energy shield** generator, a teleportation device, and a built-in **Gravity cannon**. In the event of assassins getting past their guards, they are able to defend themselves quite well with the **Gravity cannon**.^[4]

Since the activation of the **Halo Array**, the Prophet's numbers have been dwindling, with the destruction of their original homeworld 3200 years before the events of 2552 likely contributing. At the time of 2552, there were only 23,831,463 Prophets existing. After the **Flood** invasion of High Charity, their new "Home World," the majority of their species was consumed, leaving less than a thousand alive. Most were doomed by the Sangheili's quarantine of **Delta Halo** and the rest of the **Covenant Fleet**.

Description

Edit

Anatomy and Physiology

Edit

While little is known of the San'Shyuum homeworld, what is known is that its gravity was lower than Earth's.^[8] Because of this, and their status of political figureheads who perform little physical work, most Prophets are physically frail creatures. They prefer to move around using anti-gravity technology. A life of physical inactivity leaves most if not all Prophets withered and weak. They are capable of moving unaided, however: In the *Halo 3* level *The Covenant*, the Prophet of Truth is seen walking for a short amount of time, as well as firing a **Jiralhanae Spiker**. During the time of the **Human-San'Shyuum alliance**, younger San'Shyuum were considered to be physically attractive beings by Forerunner standards, as well as capable warriors.^[9]

Each Prophet has distinct, often fur-covered lobes of skin hanging underneath their chin similar to a beard, known as "wattles."^[10] Prophets of greater age, for example the High Prophet of Mercy, have skin lobes on either side of their heads reminiscent of ears; despite this resemblance, the San'Shyuum actually receive sound at the back of the head. Older Prophets, such as the Prophet of Mercy, appear to lose the pigment in their skin as they age and turn a shade of grey, then

- Prophet of Restraint
 - Prophet of Supposition
 - Minister of Etiology
-
- Holy One
 - High One
 - Hierarchs (High Prophets only)

Other nomenclature

[Source] • [Talk]

white. Prophets have three digits on each hand, and are usually found wearing ornamental pieces that may also double as life support systems. These head-pieces bear a holographic representation of a Halo (indicating that the Covenant have known about the [Halo rings](#) for much longer than originally thought), but each is uniquely shaped and highly ornamental. However [San'Shyuum High Councilors](#) have been seen wearing more functional robes that lack any ornamentation whatsoever. Lower Status Prophets wear simple robes and can be found on the seating above the [Council Chamber](#) accompanying [Sangheili High Councilors](#).

Despite their physical impediments, the San'Shyuum have been able to dramatically extend their lifespans through medical advancements, allowing many individuals to live for hundreds of years.^[1]

Culture [Edit](#)

Little is known about the culture of the San'Shyuum. In an unknown time, before the Covenant was formed, a thousand or so pro-technology Prophets called [Reformists](#) left their homeworld in the [Forerunner dreadnought](#), leaving the anti-tech [Stoics](#), stranded.^[10] The resulting calamity meant that the Covenant San'Shyuum population was reduced to a few thousand, forcing the species to carefully manage their gene pool to prevent the loss of beneficial genes and the introduction of undesirable traits, with individuals possessing negative recessive traits placed in the [Roll of Celibates](#) to prevent their breeding. The Prophet of Truth is on such a list. However, if they should have such sexual urges, the Prophets will use concubines. If such a pregnancy should occur, however, they must be aborted, or the children will be killed at birth and the father sterilized.^[11]

It is known that the fertility cycles of female San'Shyuum are short and few and far between, which would make it difficult for San'Shyuum to have children. As a result, they would hold a celebration called a [Birthing Period](#) when a child was conceived, which was very uncommon.

With regards to naming practices, each San'Shyuum has a given name and a family name. However, once they rise to a certain level in the bureaucracy, they prefer to be addressed by their title.^[12] Upon their ascension, Hierarchs may select a regal name from a list of former High Prophets. For example, the Prophet Hod Rumnt is always addressed by his titles, such as Philologist or his regal name, the [Prophet of Mercy](#).

Language [Edit](#)

Like most members of the Covenant, the majority of San'Shyuum typically speak in a dialect of the [Sangheili](#) language, which is the [lingua franca](#) of the Covenant. Although they are known to have their own language, it is seldom used in comparison to the more pervasive Sangheili language.

The San'Shyuum also used non-verbal communication, in the form of elaborate or simple hand gestures, though some involved movement of the head. Most other races such as Sangheili, were completely unaware of this. The San'Shyuum were also able to convey expression through this hand gesture, such as irony, amusement, respect, empathy, and satisfaction. An extra flip of the thumb was being used mockingly. The Stotics on Janjur Qom seemed to have used the same hand gesture.

Known Gestures [Edit](#)

The following is a list of hand gestures known to be used by San'Shyuum.

- *"All things flow away."* - Rippling the three fingers of one's right hand, a gesture of regret.
- *"Esteemed colleagues, let us begin."* - The rippling of a hand, a traditional sign.
- *"I have decided. It will be done."* - Formed by a sinuous motion with the head and a hand gesture.

History [Edit](#)

Human-San'Shyuum alliance [Edit](#)

Main articles: [Human-San'Shyuum alliance](#) and [Prehistoric San'Shyuum civilization](#)

Sometime around 110,000 B.C. the San'Shyuum were part of an alliance with the [Humans' empire](#), forming a major power in the Orion Arm of the galaxy. During this period, they encountered the [Flood](#) for the first time, but the spread of the infection was successfully pushed back by their human allies while it was still relatively minor. The empire later collapsed when the San'Shyuum surrendered during the [Human-Forerunner war](#).^[13]

Quarantine [Edit](#)

Abandoning their hedonistic life styles for guidance under religious elders, the San'Shyuum were allowed to colonize one other world but were kept in quarantine under the [Confirmer](#) and the [Deep Reverence](#). But as the Confirmer grew lax in his duties, the San'Shyuum began stockpiling weapons.

During the [Forerunner-Flood war](#), [The Librarian](#) visited [Janjur Qom](#) to secure specimens of San'Shyuum for preservation from the Halo Array. The San'Shyuum elders correctly guessed that a catastrophe was imminent, and launched a short-lived uprising against their Forerunner overseers. All San'Shyuum on the planet were subsequently killed when a Halo was fired on a low power setting nearby.

The Ark and reseeded [Edit](#)

The San'Shyuum would be reseeded on their homeworld following the firing of the Halo Array. Having lost nearly all memory of the Forerunners, they discovered Forerunner technology on their homeworld and based their religion around the artifacts they found.

Main article: [San'Shyuum Civil War](#)

As revealed in [Halo: Contact Harvest](#), the San'Shyuum left their homeworld, Janjur Qom, with only about one thousand in their population due to a brutal civil war on their home planet. Just like the [Sangheili-San'Shyuum war](#) that would take place later on, it all began when some San'Shyuum believed that they should enter into the Forerunner dreadnought present on their planet, even though many of the population believed that they shouldn't ever touch the ship and should revere it as it was, which was presumed to be trapped in the surface of the planet as though it had crashed there. The two sides fighting in this war were called the [Stoics](#), or the San'Shyuum who refused to enter and desecrate the Dreadnought, and the San'Shyuum who wanted to develop new technologies by entering the Dreadnought, called [Reformists](#).^[10]

In [2100 BCE](#) at the climax of the Civil War, about a thousand of the Reformers commandeered the Dreadnought, while the Stoics debated what to do, since even their hate could not bring them to destroy the object of their reverence. However, when the Reformers took flight from the planet they tore a chunk out of it.^[14]

Even though the Reformers were victorious and had left the Stoics (who sent out communication messages threatening that they would be damned for their digressions to [the gods](#)) behind, they realized that they were indeed ruined by the fact that there were only about a thousand that had joined their cause to control the Dreadnought.^[14] With an extremely small gene pool they would need to create strict controls around mating to prevent potentially disastrous inbreeding. The next step in San'Shyuum history would be the [Sangheili-San'Shyuum war](#), but by the time of the war began they had developed a naval fleet to complement the Dreadnought.

Sangheili-San'Shyuum war [Edit](#)

Main article: [Sangheili-San'Shyuum war](#)

The war between the [Sangheili](#) and the San'Shyuum began soon after their first encounter in [938 BCE](#). Sangheili believed that [Forerunner](#) technology should not be touched or used for personal gain while most of the San'Shyuum believed otherwise, and disassembled Forerunner relics to produce their own versions. Their first meeting resulted in a bloody engagement. Physically the Sangheili were far superior. One Sangheili warrior was the equal to at least ten San'Shyuum.^[15] However, technologically, the San'Shyuum had the advantage: they had the Forerunner dreadnought which proceeded to wipe out the Sangheili armada using hit-and-run tactics. Eventually in [852 BCE](#), in order to ensure the survival of both races, the Sangheili gave up their own conviction, and the two races merged to form the early Covenant with the San'Shyuum as the head religious leaders and the Sangheili as the physical backbone and defenders of the Prophets.

Fall of High Charity [Edit](#)

With the outbreak of the Flood and its subsequent arrival on the holy city [High Charity](#), the San'Shyuum will have had two extinction events visited upon them within a single great cycle. Only those individuals who were permanently posted somewhere other than their *ersatz* homeworld are certain to have survived. Even those who held some position within the Covenant Fleet have no hope for survival, as the entire fleet was present at Installation 05 and the Sangheili quarantined it. This is also impacted by many Sangheili killing the San'Shyuum in an act of vengeance and/or honor. Their current total population is now estimated at less than one thousand. It is likely that the number of Flood Prophet forms are drastically higher as a result of the Flood outbreak.

Post-War [Edit](#)

Little is known about what happened to the San'Shyuum after the [Human-Covenant war](#), but according to [Sav Fel](#) the rest of the San'Shyuum that survived, ran away with most of the remaining Huragok.^[16]

Appearances [Edit](#)

The Prophet of Regret is the only Prophet that is confronted in combat by [John-117](#) in the [Halo series](#) in the game *Halo 2*. He appears at the level called [Regret](#). The Prophets do make other appearances though, mostly in the cinematic sequences in *Halo 2*. In fact, in most of the cinematic sequences, there is at least one Prophet present. Also, Mercy's corpse is found at the beginning of the level called [High Charity](#), and Truth's corpse can be seen at the last playable section of [The Covenant](#) in *Halo 3*.

The Prophet of Regret also appears as an in-game "Hero" unit in [Halo Wars](#), riding his gravity throne amidst combat. He can call down a "Cleansing beam" or glassing beam that drains the players resources; it is guided around by one of the thumbsticks.

Known Prophets [Edit](#)

High Prophets [Edit](#)

- [High Prophet of Restraint](#) (Deposed)
- [High Prophet of Tolerance](#) (Deposed)
- [High Prophetess of Obligation](#) (Deposed)
- [High Prophet of Mercy](#) (Deceased)
- [High Prophet of Regret](#) (Deceased)
- [High Prophet of Truth](#) (Deceased)
- [Unidentified Prophet \(The Duel\)](#) (Unknown)

Lesser Prophets [Edit](#)

- [Prophet of Supposition](#) (Unknown)

- [Prophet of Pity](#) (Deceased)
- [Prophet of Disdain](#) (Unknown)
- [Prophet of Objection](#) (Unknown)
- [Prophet of Stewardship](#) (Deceased)
- [Unidentified Prophet \(The Babysitter\)](#) (Deceased)
- [Prophet of Conviction](#) (Deceased)
- [Prophet of Candor](#) (Unknown)

Legates [Edit](#)

- [Minister of Etiology](#) (Deceased)
- [Minister of Inquisition](#) (Deceased)
- [Minister of Penance](#) (Deceased)

Ranks [Edit](#)

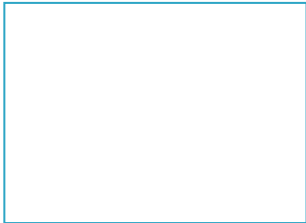
- [High Prophet- High Council \(Hierarchs\)](#)
- Lesser Prophet - High Council
- [Minister](#) - Leader of a Ministry
- Vice-Minister
- Junior Minister
- Cleric
- Scribe

Note: Only the San'Shyuum in the High Council are referred to as Prophets. This is likely due to the "Prophet of..." title only appearing in Sangheili High Councilors.

Trivia [Edit](#)

- The High Prophets' names are usually always the opposite of what their behavior is. The [Prophet of Truth](#) was prone to lying, the [Prophet of Mercy](#) was very harsh towards others, the [Prophet of Regret](#) was headstrong and unapologetic, and the [Prophet of Restraint](#) stepped down as a result of high sexual exploits when it was forbidden for him to do so, therefore showing a lack of restraint.
- A prophet's blood is strikingly red, like that of a [Human](#). This can be seen when the player melees the Prophet of Regret in *Halo 2* and if the player shoots Truth's corpse in *Halo 3*.
- *Perfidia* is Latin for "Perfidy," which means "a deliberate breach of trust, faithlessness, treachery." *Vermis* means, "worm." Thus, the Prophets' scientific name can be translated into "treacherous worm."
- *Halo: Contact Harvest* states that only the highest-ranking Prophets have the luxury of traveling in singular platforms in High Charity. Lower-ranking Prophets have to travel in groups of threes, fives or tens. This is because the thrones of lower-ranking Prophets are not individually capable of flight, so they must combine gravity fields with other thrones in order to fly.
- The *Halo 3* Limited Edition [Bestiarum](#) states that there are less than 1,000 San'Shyuum left in the universe after High Charity was consumed by the [Flood](#), killing the majority of the San'Shyuum population (approx. 20 million).
- It is possible that their thrones are inspired by [Frieza's](#) hover throne in [Dragonball Z](#). Or more likely by [Baron Harkonnen's](#) hover belt from [Dune](#).
- They are the only Covenant species that don't appear in *Halo: Reach*.
- There are 19 known prophets in the Covenant.
- The gravity throne has its own weapon called the [Gravity cannon](#).

- Gallery [Edit](#)



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7/9

Appearances

Edit

- [Halo 2](#) (First appearance)
 - [Halo 2 Anniversary](#)
- [Halo 3](#)
- [Halo Wars](#)
- [Halo 3: ODST](#) (Legendary ending)
- [Halo: The Flood](#)
- [Halo: First Strike](#)
- [Halo: Cryptum](#)
- [Halo: Primordium](#) (Mentioned only)
- [Halo: Silentium](#) (Mentioned only)
- [Halo: Contact Harvest](#)
- [Halo: Ghosts of Onyx](#) (Mentioned only)
- [Halo: Broken Circle](#)
- [Halo 5: Guardians](#) (Hologram)

Sources

Edit

- ↑

1.0 1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4

[Halo Waypoint Species: San'Shyuum](#)
- ↑

"He wore a red over robe, a gold under robe, and somewhere, hidden beneath all the fabric, an antigrav belt which served to keep his body suspended a full unit off the deck." – [Halo: The Flood](#), page 5
- ↑

[HBO Forums](#)
- ↑

4.0 4.1 4.2 4.3

[Halo 2](#)
- ↑

5.0 5.1

[Conversations from the Universe](#)
- ↑

[Halo: The Flood](#)
- ↑

[Halo: First Strike](#)
- ↑

[Halo Encyclopedia](#), Page 258
- ↑

[Halo: Cryptum](#)
- ↑

10.0 10.1 10.2

[Halo: Contact Harvest](#)
- ↑

[Halo: Contact Harvest](#), page 264
- ↑

[Halo Encyclopedia](#), Page 119
- ↑

[Halo: Cryptum](#) – page 113
- ↑

14.0 14.1

[Halo: Contact Harvest](#), page 262
- ↑

[Halo: Contact Harvest](#), page 147
- ↑

[Halo: Mortal Dictata - Page 113](#)

Related Pages

Edit

- [High Prophets](#)
- [High Council](#)
- [List of San'Shyuum characters](#)

v · d · e		Known San'Shyuum	
High Prophet		Mercy • Obligation • Regret • Restraint • Tolerance • Truth • Unidentified	
Lesser Prophet		Candor • Conviction • Disdain • Fortitude • Objection • Pity • Stewardship • Supposition • Zo Resken	

16/1/2018

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Prelates	Concert • Discovery • Etiology • Inquisition • Penance • Tem'Bhetek • Boru'a'Neem • Alo Sebukah
Others	First Prophet • Sustaining Wind • Unknown Prophet (Ariel) • (The Babysitter) • Zeal • Yalar'Otan'Elat

v · d · e


Members of the Covenant Empire, client and fringe races

Leadership	San'Shyuum • Sangheili • Jiralhanae (Briefly)
Clients	Jiralhanae • Huragok • Lekgolo (Dipholekgolo • Mgalekgolo • Rhulolekgolo • Sbaolekgolo • Khantolekgolo • Thanolekgolo)
Fringe	Yanme'e • Kig-Yar (Ruutian • T'vaoran • Ibie'shan) • Unggoy
Other	Sharquoi

Discussions about San'Shyuum

Start a Discussion

Are the San'Shyuum as endangered as we thought?



Treadz2000

The San'Shyuum as we know it are critically endangered. Their entire race lived on High Charity, and only about a thousand or less st... 4 months ago

See more discussions >

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|
Covenant Species
|
Halo: Cryptum
|

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